

## Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8979

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T NOFORN VIENNA 4335

EXDIS

FROM US REP MBFR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: MBFR: SOVIET COMMENTS ON DATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

1. DURING DISCUSSION OF COMMUNIQUE MAY 23 ( REPORTED SEPTTEL), KHLESTOV COMMENTED THAT, OF COURSE, THE ALLIED DRAFT PARAGRAPH ON COMMUNIQUE GIVEN THE SOVIETS THE PREVIOUS EVENING CONTAINED MENTION OF THE DATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THIS MIGHT BE A PROBLEM. US REP SAID HE DID NOT SEE WHY IT SHOULD BE A PROBLEM. ACCORDING TO A FRAGMENTARY ACCOUNT HE HAD HEARD, MINISTER GROMYKO HAD RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE DATE OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO BONN WITH MR. BREZHNEV, BUT IN AN INCONCLUSIVE WAY. KHLESTOV AND MOVCHAN APPEARED UNAWARE THAT THIS HAD OCCURRED AND ASKED IF OTHER NATO ALLIES WERE ALSO AWARE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT. US REP SAID THAT SINCE GROMYKO'S POINT HAD CONCERNED A COMMON ENTERPRISE IN WHICH ALL THE ALLIES WERE INVOLVED, THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES HAD QUITE CORRECTLY INFORMED ALLIES THAT HE HAD RAISED IT. KHLESTOV INDICATED THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED THIS WAS AN UNEXPECTED AND NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT SINCE HD HAD HOPED TO DEAL WITH THEISSUE ONLY IN US- SOVIET CHANNELS.

2. KHLESTOV ASKED IF THE US JOINED IN THE VIEW OF A NUMBER OF WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES IN VIENNA WHO HAD TOLD HIM PERSONALLY AND HAD MENTIONED IN THEIR OPENING STATMENTS THAT THEY MADE  
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A CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN CSCE AND MBFR TALKS. THE US REP SAID HIS OPENING STATEMENT HAD CONTAINED NO SUCH REFERENCE AND THAT HIS AUTHORITIES CONTINUED TO CONSIDER THE TWO EXERCISES AS SEPARATE. US REP SAID ALL THE WESTERN ALLIED WANTED MBFR NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER. IT MIGHT BE REASONABLE, FOR PURELY PRACTICAL REASONS OF ALLOWING MORE TIME FOR ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, TO THINK IN TERMS OF THE END OF PERIOD, PERHAPS OCTOBER 30, AS AN OPENING DATE FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT HE WAS SURE THAT THIS WAS THE LATEST DATE THE US WOULD FIND ACCEPTABLE. IT WAS BASED ON THE TIMETABLE FOR MBFR AND CSCE PROPOSED BY THE SOVIETS IN SEPTEMBER 1972. THE US WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO GUARANTEE THAT CSCE WOULD CONCLUDE PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS ON AN OCTOBER 30 DATE. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS THE USVIEW THAT MBFR NEGOTIATIONS MUST START NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 30. THE SOVIETS WOULD BE AWARE FROM THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE IN HELSINKI THAT THE PROGRESS OF CSCE WOULD ALSO DEPEND ON ATTITUDES OF THE NEUTRAL AND NON- ALIGNED PARTICIPANTS.

3. THE US REP SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THE BACKGROUND FOR THE QUESTION ON TIMING NOW APPARENTLY BEING RAISED BY THE SOVIETS CONCERNING THE DATE, BUT ON THE BASIS OF THE LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO HIM, IT APPEARED THAT THIS QUESTION MIGHT REPRESENT A MISTAKEN ASSESSMENT WHICH IT WAS TO BE HOPED WOULD BE RECONSIDERED. KHLESTOV'S REACTION WAS TO SHAKE HIS HEAD SADLY AND TO SAY THAT HIS DELEGATIONS NOW HAD A BIG NEW PROBLEM FOR WHICH HE COULD NOT AT PRESENT SEE ANY SOLUTION. WAS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO MENTION A SPECIFIC DATE IN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE? US REP SAID IT WAS NECESSARY AND WOULD BE EXPECTED BY ALL. HUMES

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